

VZCZCXRO8678
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #1107 1651222
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 131222Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3106
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0273
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 9421
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001107

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2018

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA DISAPPOINTED ABOUT USG WITHDRAWAL FROM UN
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: STATE 61034 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b
& d).

11. (C) On June 11, PolCouns delivered reftel demarche to Ambassador M.K. Ibrahim, Director of the Second United Nations Division in the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Ibrahim has been one of Nigeria's representatives to the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) for some time and spoke frankly about his great regret over the USG decision to completely withdraw from the Council. Ibrahim suggested that "walking away" was not the solution, noting that the USG did not withdraw from the UN Security Council despite its not being able to act on issues important to us. Ibrahim noted that Nigeria has not left the HRC although many issues "objectionable" to the law and culture of the GON have been brought up, such as the rights of homosexuals and challenges to Shari'a. In the end, Ibrahim said he was "optimistic" that necessary reforms to the HRC would take place, allowing the USG to return to active participation.

12. (C) Comparing the HRC to a "toddler", Ibrahim noted the Council has only existed for three years and it needs time to find its footing. PolCouns, however, replied that in those three years, the Council managed to reproduce the failings that took its predecessor, the Human Rights Commission, 40 years to develop, and had gone on to develop new ones. Ibrahim countered that the UN HRC has also developed positive institutions, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), that still need to be built upon. Ibrahim added that Nigeria and other countries greatly valued comments made by USG representatives during the most recent UPR; he will be drawing on some of those comments in the country report he is preparing for Nigeria.

13. (C) Ibrahim reiterated his dismay over the USG's decision, and stated that not only is the Council losing a valuable presence, but the USG is a losing a valuable opportunity to comment on human rights, adding that isolation is not the answer. When PolCouns promised the USG would continue advocating for human rights through different methods, Ibrahim replied that such methods, like the U.S. Human Rights Report and Trafficking in Persons Report, although appreciated by Nigeria, are only bilateral efforts rather than the multi-lateral ones that can be made through the UN HRC. Stating that human rights are a global issue, Ibrahim

reiterated that he remained hopeful that our disengagement would prompt the Council to make the necessary reforms to encourage renewed USG participation.

SANDERS